

Under the scheme, aids and appliances upto value of Rs. 3600 are distributed to the disabled persons free of cost if their monthly income is upto Rs. 1200 and 50% of the cost if the income is between Rs. 1201 to Rs. 2500.

- (8) Government of India have recently enacted 'The Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995.' The Act provides prevention and early detection of disabilities, education, employment, non-discrimination etc., for disabled persons including mentally handicapped persons.
- (9) A National Handicapped Finance & Development Corporation has been registered on 24.1.97 under Section 25 of the Companies Act, 1956 to provide opportunities for skill development and loan assistance on easy terms to the disabled persons to set up self-employment ventures.

[English]

Families below Poverty Line

3149. SHRI R.B. RAI :
SHRI RAM NAIK :

Will the Minister of FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is considerable variance in the number of families Below Poverty Line (BPL) as anticipated by the Ministry and the States for implementing Targeted Public Distribution Scheme;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor;

(c) whether the Government are aware that ceiling of 60.45 lakh BPL families imposed by the Union Government for Maharashtra is too inadequate;

(d) whether the Government also propose to review the same particularly for hilly and backward areas of Uttar Pradesh, and

(e) the manner in which the Government expect the States to cater to the needs of BPL families in excess of estimates?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS (SHRI RAGHUVANS PRASAD SINGH) : (a) Government of India have adopted the estimates of population Below Poverty Line (BPL) arrived at by the methodology of an Expert Group on "Estimation of proportion and number of poor" constituted by the Planning Commission under the Chairmanship of late Prof. Lakdawala. According to the Planning

Commission, the Expert Group methodology gives "poverty estimates closest to ground reality." There is considerable difference in the Below Poverty Line (BPL) population estimated by several State Governments including Maharashtra and the estimates given by the Expert group.

(b) The State-wise estimates of percentage of poor made by the Expert Group are based on a uniform methodology from the quinquennial National Sample Survey (NSS) data on consumer expenditure. The consumer expenditure survey is carried out by National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO) of the Deptt. of Statistics, Ministry of Planning, all over India in a scientific manner. On the other hand the States do not follow a uniform approach in household survey. The Survey conducted by State Governments are suspected to have an upward bias in the estimation of poor families because survey is conducted with specific purpose of identifying families for selection of beneficiaries in anti-poverty programme.

(c) As per the estimates based on the Expert Group methodology the households Below Poverty Line (BPL) in Maharashtra are 60.45 lakhs. These estimates are applied to all States and UTs.

(d) and (e) States are free to issue more foodgrains or issue foodgrains at lower prices provided the additional required quantum of foodgrains and funds are made available from their own resources. Some States like Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu etc. are doing so.

[Translation]

Announcement for Earthquake Victims

3150. SHRI DADA BABURAO PARANJPE : Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Hon'ble Prime Minister had made an announcement in the Press Conference in Jabalpur on June 17, 1997 that a meeting would be held next day in Delhi to decide ways and means to provide relief to the earthquake victims;

(b) if so, whether the said meeting was held, and the decisions taken therein; and

(c) if not, the time by which the proposed meeting is likely to be held for giving relief to the earthquake victims of Jabalpur?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (DR. S. VENUGOPALACHARI) : (a) During his visit to the earthquake affected areas of Madhya Pradesh on June 17, 1997, Hon'ble Prime Minister had announced that the meeting of the National Calamity